6: Lisiansky T-5 (1803-1806) 1814 OX6 Marquesas OX6

1804. May. paid us another visit, accompanied by his brother, and exchanged four cocks, which he brought with him, for one of ours, whose crowing had particularly pleased him. The brother also had taken a liking to one of our ducks, and offered a middling-size pig for her, promising at the same time another, not quite so large, for a drake. This exchange was not only advantageous, but very gratifying to me, as it might be the means of introducing into the island a useful domestic bird, unknown there before. During this visit, a circumstance took place of a serio-comic nature. One of my midshipmen, in examining the oar of a canoe that I had purchased, happened to let it fall, and it struck against the head of the king, who was sitting on the deck. His majesty immediately fell down, and began to make the most extraordinary wry faces, as if in great pain. The accident mortified me so much, that I reprimanded the young man a little severely for his carelessness. He was himself considerably alarmed; and, in apologizing, presented the king with a small piece of iron. This changed the scene; his majesty burst into a loud laugh, and expressed by signs, how cleverly he had deceived us, and that he was not in the least hurt. This scene over, the king went on shore in high spirits, and I was myself not a little pleased that the accident terminated as it did.

In the afternoon, captain Krusenstern came to see me, and in the course of conversation informed me, that the king had also brought him in the morning a pig; but as on his coming on board, the officers being at dinner, there was nobody to receive him on deck, he was so much displeased, that he ordered the pig to be taken back again. Though this circumstance appeared to us of

/2 cont./

personality, did not seem to coincide in certain areas with many of the more obvious native customs. Furthermore, a number of practices described for the Marquesas not only seemed to be completely absent there but also contrary to data from elsewhere in Polynesia. Preliminary investigation into the sexual behavior of the natives immediately brought forth evidence of a situation which was somewhat more complex than originally apparent, being particularly interesting as a case in the dynamics of Marquesan culture contact, as will be demonstrated in this paper.

Investigation Techniques

In the investigation of sexual behavior in the Marquesas, fluency in the language was of utmost importance. Actually, I believe that it is extremely difficult to conduct any type of valid anthropological investigation in Eastern Polynesia without attaining linguistic proficiency. The Marquesans use their native tongue as a weapon against outsiders, who they consider will never bother to learn it. A large amount of joking /3/ and trickery is indulged in before the face of the investigator who must work through an interpreter. In such a situation, it is relatively easy for the native to impart erroneous information without too much fear of being apprehended in his falsehood.

The native language has become an efficient tool with which the Marquesan may satisfy his intense resentment against the privileged white intruders, and their inquisitive prying, by astutely misleading them, until, hopelessly confused, they become a source of fun and butt of derision for the whole population.

However, knowledge of the language on the part of the investigator makes such deviousness impossible, contributing materially to the collection of information on any topic from weather prognoses to historical traditions.

Direct interrogation of informants on the physical aspects of sexual behavior proved to have a relatively limited utility. Despite the fact that sexual topics comprise a large part of the

/9 cont./
known, however, the most popular consisted of grated unripe pineapple. This had to be eaten for three days before the abortion would begin. During the period of labor and after, a hot stone or bottle full of hot water is placed on the stomach to ease the pain. It is stated that this medicinal preparation is only efficient during the first three months of gestation. No references to mechanically induced abortions were ever noted. 847 [824]

No rigid tapu surround the pregnant woman, although it is certain that such existed in the past, particularly in regard to food. A commonly kept custom at present is that of the avoidance of salty foods which are believed to cause mouth sores and "cradle cap" on infants (mate kea). 843

Cravings are common among Marquesan women during pregnancy. Particularly popular are shellfish varieties normally eaten as supplements to main diet items, such as chitons (mama) and patellas (titi). Other items often requested are lobsters (u'ua tai), shrimp (u'ua vai) and a delicacy made of putrid sting ray flesh (ha ha'ua). [262]

Intercourse does not cease during pregnancy until the last few weeks, if at all. Usually the husband becomes dissatisfied with the unwieldy stomach of his wife and attempts to find some gratification elsewhere. /10/ Some joking about intercourse during pregnancy occurs, with statements being made that one must indulge to "make the baby strong" or "to feed the baby." [522]

In labor (ha'a totohi i te tama) no efforts are made to ease the pains (tua toto). Women usually retire when pain begins, remaining secluded until delivery. At present, administrative edicts require the presence of all expectant mothers at the Taiohae dispensary 6 weeks prior to the estimated date of delivery. If the women follow these directives, they merely report to the hospital upon the first sign of pain. However, many prefer to bear the children at home, as the trip is often the cause of premature delivery, and the 6 week sojourn in Taiohae is only possible for those who possess relatively well-to-do relatives. 844 [656] [743]

/34/

After puberty, males usually have their first complete heterosexual experience. This most often occurs with an older married woman in her thirties or forties and frequently in the context of serial intercourse, in which the woman will receive a number of young boys in rapid succession. Groups of boys visit the houses of most of the married women during the temporary absences of their husbands. At such times, the uninitiated boys will often be invited to participate, and the women take special pains to be pleasing and patient with them. Most adult men look back quite fondly on their first sexual partner, expressing amusement at their own inexperienced bungling. This pattern of behavior, in which older women initiate the young males and serve as the object of serial intercourse for groups of boys, is adhered to quite closely and is apparently a source of enjoyment for most Marquesan women. The highly virile attentions of the younger males provide a marked contrast to typical marital sexual relations, as well as being a source of some amusement to the older women.

The post-pubertal boy is quickly drawn into one of a number of male groups called collectively taure'a re'a (Tahitian: meaning "those who paint themselves with turmeric). These groups prowl at night, visiting the houses of the unmarried girls and temporarily solitary married women. In the evening before supper, the preparations for night forays are quite elaborate: very careful bathing, following by dousing with perfume or coconut oil and heavy applications of commercial pomade to the /35/ hair. Flowers are worn behind the ear, flashlights are an absolute must (the large, heavy variety being preferred), and guitars are often carried. As soon as darkness falls, these groups meet in prearranged places along the main paths in the valley to sing and talk for a few hours before starting on a tour of the houses. A great deal of information is exchanged at this time as to the whereabouts of various married males, and unmarried girls. Night fishing expeditions take the men away, leaving their wives available, and girls frequently have gatherings analogous to small "pajama-parties." These factors obviously affect the prospects

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Girls prefer males who are quite virile in the Marquesan sense of the word, i.e., are capable of frequent quick copulations. A male who is gentle and considerate in the sex act and who is witty and flattering is very much preferred. 832

During daylight hours the boys are generally occupied in routine economic tasks as are the girls, whether alone or in groups. The contacts that occur between boys and girls in such situations are marked by a general shyness and coolness on the part of the girls. When a couple are interested in each other, it is concealed by a studied indifference which is, of course, as much of an indication to the observer as hand-holding and the usual U. S. A. teen-age bill-and-coo. Joking is characteristic of interaction between groups of potential mates. It is usually of a slightly off-color nature, loud, and directed at no individual in particular but at the group of the opposite sex as a whole. In such joking it is customary to make use of a teen-age "language" of seemingly innocuous terms which have been invested, by virtue of some recent happening, with special sexual significance or meaning. The "language" varies markedly from place to place because it is so dependent on in-group events. It fluctuates rapidly within a given locale because new happenings constantly produce new words. 883 834 883 522 198 834

An example of the type of words involved is provided by a term used in the teen-age language of Hatiheu in 1957. The word -- puta'a ta'a -- /39/ objectively designated conch Murex ramosus, but was used by the adolescents to refer to the vulva. Another linguistic trait is the use of one of a variety of formerly common adult secret languages, involving "pig latin." The most common of these is known as Te'eo uhitua -- the language of Uhitu'a (a valley in the Hapa'a region of Nuku Hiva). According to legend, all Uhitua people talked in pig latin. [173]

This language is sometimes used in the joking and banter between teen-agers and may also be used in person-to-person meetings of two lovers. Some examples are given below:

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Marquesan		Uhi tua
pehea 'oe?	(where are you going)	peheiherea o'oe'oroe
makimaki	(want or desire)	ma'i ma'i maraki
to'e	(clitoris)	to'i to'etoroe
eue	(erect penis)	e'ui'urue
pipirio	(vulva)	pi'i pi'i pirio
tea tea	(semen)	teate'i terea

Also used in joking exchanges are secret nicknames which are not usually known by the person to whom they are applied. Thus, an individual may be discussed in very derogatory fashion in his very presence. Much mocking impersonation is also used, as the Marquesans are inclined to study minor idiosyncracies in order to be able to mimic their possessor. [551]

Female coyness at chance encounters with groups of boys often results in what amounts to athletic contests. A group of girls will approach a group /40/ of boys on a path and shout some type of insults. The boys will respond and try to stop the girls, who run and hide. The boys then run after them but do not catch up. The girls run again and again the boys give chase. Finally, the girls when overtaken act as though nothing had happened, and display a somewhat arrogant attitude toward the boys. 834 883 883 526

Soccer has been introduced by missionaries as a recreation with the added hoped-for benefit that it will prove fatiguing enough to cut down nocturnal activity. In each valley, formal adult teams are organized but children and adolescents play also, usually on Sundays after church. The same kind of rough joking insults and athletic competitiveness between potential sexual partners is to be noted in these games. Boys often become sexually aroused to the point of complete erection of the penis, which serves as a further source of jokes and banter. No real attempts are made to hide the erection and the boy will continue playing. I once witnessed a boy play soccer for nearly two hours with a constant erection, in front of the church in Hatiheu. 832 [177] [197]

Although the everyday public contacts between boys and girls are marked by the indifference and generally rough conduct 832 883

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Oral stimulation of the genitalia before or during copulation is not practiced by the majority of adolescents. It is regarded with some disgust. A great deal of joking between male adults and youngsters revolves around cunnilinctus (kai ma te to'e). Youngsters are often asked if they have performed cunnilinctus on a particular girl: when a negative response is given, with some expression of disgust, the statement is made that the boy knows nothing of sexual techniques but should not be afraid to experiment. A common statement which was almost a slogan was: E aha te ha'a metau? E kiko 'en ana! -- "(What is there to be afraid of? It's (only) Marquesan meat!" Another slogan of this type, like the last, attributed to a living or still remembered "sage" was 'O te to'e te kai 'o te hakaiki -- "the clitoris is the food of the chief." Most girls are equally repelled by the suggestion of fellatio (kai 'i te pia), although it is seldom attempted by the adolescent males, who do not seem to consider the possibility to be too interesting, maintaining that it is devoid of the body movements (tamure -- from the Tahitian dance of the same name featuring pelvic motion resembling that of intercourse) that play a large role in the enjoyment of the sex act.

/43/The boy usually removes his shorts but often leaves on his shirt. The girl will usually lift her skirt and may open her blouse slightly. The position of intercourse is almost invariably with the girl in a supine position with her legs flexed and apart, and the boy braced on his hands over her. Variant positions are seldom tried, for as one informant remarked: "The result is the same, no matter how you do it!" Once the penis is introduced, pelvic motion by both parties begins, continuing until orgasms are experienced. Marquesan girls apparently have practically no difficulty in experiencing orgasms; they are apparently able to attain orgasm after a relatively small number of sexual experiences, learning to control it quite quickly so that they will reach the climax with the partner. A number of words are used to refer to various aspects of the sexual climax. Manini (lit. sweet) refers mainly to the sensation of pleasure, release and well-being attendant upon orgasm and ejaculation. Hakate'a literally means: "make

/53/
female kinesic habits. A transvestite is known as mahu'o hiva, 838
"homosexual of the ridge pole," referring to his abiding around the house in the performance of female chores.

Pederasty and mutual masturbation are common among normal male adolescents. Isolated male groups will often become so stimulated by their sexual talk and horseplay that these practices will be indulged. In pederasty, as in masturbation, the penis is moistened with saliva before introduction. The act of pederasty generally involves some discomfort for the subordinate of the pair, but it is generally a reciprocal practice; therefore, the discomfort is considered worth the sexual satisfaction obtained when the dominant role is assumed.

Masturbation contests are quite common in adolescence, as at earlier age levels. [839] [883]

Fellatio is apparently uncommon in "normal" male homosexual behavior, but is considered characteristic of the behavior of the mahu or homosexual deviate.

There are still a number of valleys on the major islands of the archipelago, in which the population is quite small and the females available as sexual partners are either few or completely absent. If adolescent boys are present in these valleys, they must either travel to other valleys at night to find girls, which may be difficult and dangerous; or, they must indulge in homosexual relations. Ho'dumi, one such valley that I visited on Nuku Hiva, had a population of 35 people. /54/ There were five or six adolescent boys and two unmarried girls who were sisters to two of the boys. The two girls were carefully supervised by their parents, and contacts were nearly impossible for the boys. The boys had formed a loose group for work and recreation which also served as the center for homosexual activities. During the period in which we conducted excavations in the valley, we had excellent opportunities to observe this group. They generally retired to the interior of the heavily overgrown valley for homosexual activities in the afternoon. Their activities were well-known to the workmen, who often chided them asking who had played the girl's role that day and if the person who did did not have a sore anus.

838 883 [361] [162] [162] [123] [522]

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are often used for this purpose, as a result of which one often [824]
hears males jokingly refer to "the tired banana" (meika pa'u pa'u)
before girls who might have been indulging in the activity. [522]

Incest is by no means unheard of in the Marquesas: in 835
fact, many Tahitians cite incest as one of the distinguishing
characteristics of /56/ Marquesan sexual behavior which,
however, is a wild exaggeration.

Now, the incest tapu are no longer clear. Furthermore,
it is uncertain what the former practices were. On the
parental generation, the tapu extends to both parents' rela-
tives of the opposite sex of ego, regardless of age. In cases
where mother's sister is almost equal in age to ego, the
tapu still holds. Even in cases where a male's mother's sister
is extremely promiscuous, sexual relationships are forbidden.

On ego's generation, tapu apply to all siblings of op-
posite sex and to classificatory siblings of the opposite sex
(cousins). How far out these tapu extended could not be de-
termined. In marriage there is a kind of semisanctioned re-
lationship between in-laws of the opposite sex. Intercourse
between a man and his wife's sisters, or a woman and her
husband's brothers, is quite common. One informant described
how he repeatedly induced his wife to stay overnight at her
parents' home so that he would have access to her younger
sister, who he preferred.

In case of death, there is a preference shown toward the 587
levirate. The son of an informant was killed while pearl-
diving in the Tuamotu archipelago in August 1956, leaving
a wife and three children. The informant immediately dis-
patched a younger son to the widow, who was residing in
Tahiti, with the hope that the son could replace his brother
in the family. He said that it would be "nice" because the
two boys were /57/ of the same family, hence the chil-
dren would not have to grow up with an alien father who
might not love them as much.

Actual cases of incest within the nuclear family are 835
few, but receive much publicity. During the author's stay

/70 cont./
lapsed into another period of depression. Such behavior usually 837
results in infuriating the husband, and the wife may receive
a beating, followed by forced sexual intercourse. This prac- [833]
tice is regarded as being the best remedy for sexual jealousy,
and usually speeds the re-establishment of normal relations
for a time.

Sex in Later Life

Reasonably frequent sexual relations are carried on by 833 887
individuals in the sixties and seventies. Males of this age are
often capable of normal copulation, with greatly reduced fre-
quency. Fellatio and /71/ cunnilinctus are practiced. Elderly
men often seek out younger women as sexual partners, as well
as engaging in sexual relations with their mates.

Elderly women often indulge in brief liaisons with much younger males who cannot find sexual partners in their own age group. A woman of 65 spent the night with a copra schooner sailor about 35 years of age and was not subjected to any censure whatsoever. Another elderly woman, who had been a well-known promiscuous girl in her youth, was frequently a sexual partner for younger males, on occasion soliciting their attentions.

Sex in Humour

Marquesans place great emphasis on one's ability to in- 521 522 831
dulge in light, rapid-fire banter, using witticisms which span a
range from subtle puns and esoteric allusions of a nature under-
stood by only one or a few of the onlookers, to what in our
society would be termed the more coarse kinds of humour.
Much Marquesan humour is sexual or at least related to a
sexual topic.

In mixed company, under normal circumstances, care is taken to refrain from using the tapu expressions which have been discussed previously, referring to the male and female genitalia or the sex act. In such cases, the more subtle expressions and figures of speech are used; and often the conversation can be completely misunderstood. New circumlocutions

/71 cont./
and esoteric terms for sexual matters are constantly being produced, mainly by the unmarried males, it would appear. These /72/ are employed with the anticipation that the uninitiated listeners will be completely deluded.

Some examples of esoteric sexual terms have already been given (see the list of synonyms for the verb "to copulate," p. 47). The development of a few others will be presented here. The Kendal Oil Co. commercial, given nightly over Radio Tahiti, provided the material for a new term. The word "Kendal" came to be used as a verb, "to ejaculate," and nominalized to mean "semen."

In another case, the adolescents of Hatiheu were swimming off the dock in that bay. The boys discovered that several of the girls, swimming in skirts, wore no undergarments, and proceeded to dive below the girls who were treading water, and look up their dresses for a glimpse of their genitals. The girls quickly noticed the submarine observers and demanded to know what they were looking for. A boy quickly responded that they were searching for puta'a ta'a (Murex ramosus) shells. From then on, the Hatiheu esotericism for vulva was puta'a ta'a.

Among company of a single sex, the restraints on conversation are relaxed, with tapu expressions being used, except in the cases where individuals standing in certain respect relations to the speaker, such as a brother-in-law, or father, are present. In such situations, those sharing respect relationships will refrain from conversation of a baldly sexual nature.

"Obscenity" in the Marquesan tongue has changed considerably over the years, as a result of outside contact, both with other Polynesians /73/ and with Europeans. During the first three decades of this century, the aboriginal obscenities were still in use. These were most often directed at an individual's pride in status and personal cleanliness, rather than referring to sexual matters.